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Raju Kumar

Research Scholar,
Department of English,
B.R.A. Bihar University,
Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

Prof. Dr. Renu Thakur

Supervisor,
Department of English,
R.S.S. Mahila College,
Sitamarhi, Bihar.

Corresponding Author :

Raju Kumar

Research Scholar,
Department of English,
B.R.A. Bihar University,
Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

Migration, Identity and Terrorism in How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position : A Critical Study

Abstract : This paper critically explores the theme of migration, identity and terrorism in Khair's novel How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary position. This novel is facing the complex process against Islamist terrorism and extremism in the world. The novel deeply examines the complexities of modern multi-culture and focusing on two Indians and a Pakistani live in Denmark. Khair depicts diasporic identities, the challenges of integration and political dynamics which contribute to radicalization and terrorism. The narrative delves into the terms of the psychological, cultural, and social factors that how to convince a kind hearted person to invoke to become a radical and terrorist. Along with this novel is also highlighting the impact of terrorism and extremism on human and society. Very few persons in the Muslim community are staunchly to their religion and they enforce their persons to pick up the arms and destroy others religious community and country. This novel focuses on the journey of individuals like Tabish

and Ravi, who leave their country to reveal their potential to other country and becoming successful professionals while they don't have feeling of discomfort at social gatherings. By the examining of this novel, we find the element of migration, psycho-sociological, radicalization, terrorism, how to fight against Islamist terror, ordinary people turn into terrorists, showing identity, feeling of isolation and extremist ideas play role. Khair conveyed the need of empathy, awareness and strong social connection to help the causes of terrorism by his characters.

Keywords: Migration and Identity, Terrorism, Islam-phobia, Psycho-sociological, Social Segregation.

Introduction : The theme of migration, identity and terrorism specially depicts the orthodoxy of Muslim community to Jihad and social segregation. This is one of the biggest issue of the world. Indian writer and scholar Tabish Khair deeply focuses on this complex issue through his novel *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012). The novel gathers attentions to the changing of the processes of migration, terrorism and identity and it is burning when a Muslim converting to terrorist. This novel explains that the result of terrorism is not only to believe in religion it is also identity crisis, social segregation and the result of misuse religion by political purpose.

This present paper commences a

critical study of this novel to investigate how Khair presents the process of radicalization the cultural and social pressure that shape individuals, and the psychological struggles of people caught in the world of terrorism. This novel is different in style and point of view but they delve into how a simple man becomes stanchly to his jihadi ideology. At the heart of this novel is the question; how does a simple man become a terrorist? Is it only the result of the pressure of out-sider society and culture segregation or impact of psychological and emotional forces at play?

How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position deals with the context of radicalization, extremism and identity but it approaches them from a more satirical and ironic perspective. This novel sets in Denmark and it is engaged with certain contemporary issues that have been exercising all of us in different ways. This novel is based on current topics of terrorism, Islamism and the kind of suspicion that is often leads to and that it embroils a lot of other Muslims as well. There are three main protagonists Ravi, unnamed narrator and Karim. Ravi is a flamboyant, a Ph.D student from a very rich Mumbai family who is studying more for the pleasure of it than for any need to study and the unnamed narrator Muslim narrator from India who is assistant professor in a Danish university like most

middle class people working for a carrier these two are obviously friends because they are academics and because of a set of circumstances they end up renting part of a flat from Karim who is a taxi driver it comes from a lower middle class pakistani background and he is also a very religious Muslim. Now a course of one year certain events take place this taxi driver is implicated in a terror case. Now the question is he involved or he is innocent because of certain reasons these two men flamboyant highly secular very open-minded Hindu scholar and this middle-class secular Indian scholar they have to take a stand and this novel is not just political aspects of Islamism or terrorism but what this kind of suspicion, violence and misunderstandings does to us as individuals and the fear that it leads too and how these things can be dangerous too. This novel is also about love and sexuality.¹

How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position is powerful and thought-provoking work that offer a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of issues of terrorism, identity and character conflict. Through his complex characters and compelling narratives, Khair provides a deeper understanding of the psychological, social and cultural factors that contribute to radicalization, while also changing the simplistic and reductive narratives that often dominate discus-

sions of terrorism in the contemporary world. By examining the personal and emotional struggles of individuals caught in the web of extremism Khair's novels offer valuable insights into the broader issues of terrorism and identity in a globalized world.

Dr. Tabish Khair (Born on 21st March 1966) is an Indian poet, novelist, critic, reviewer and journalist. He is an associate professor in the department of English at the University of Arhus, Denmark. He was born and brought up in Gaya, Bihar and he mostly achieved his education there. He completed his graduation in English and Master of Arts in English from Magadh University, Gaya, Bihar. And then he went out of the boundary of India and completed his Ph.D. in English (1999) from Copenhagen University, Denmark. He has won the All India Poetry Prize for the poem Birds of North Europe in 1995. He is awarded The DSC Prize for South Indian Literature in 2016. This award is for Tabish Kair's Jihadi Jane. He is also awarded with The Man Asian and The Encore Prize. He is celebrated as an international poet and novelist for his poetry and novels and was made honorary fellow of creative writing of the Baptist University of Hong Kong in 2004. He got Fellowship at New Delhi University and a by-fellowship at Churchill College, Cambridge University, United Kingdom. He is a python contri-

butor to well-known international and national research journals, social media, newspapers and magazines. His most important poetry collections are *My World* (1991), *A Reporter's Diary* (1993), *The Book of Heroes : A collection of light Verse and Much Worse* (1995), *Where Parallel Lines Meet* (2000) and *Man of Glass: Poems* (2010). His other marvellous works are *Babu Fictions* (2001), *The Bus Stopped* (2004), *Other Routes* (2006), *Filming: A Love Story* (2007), *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness* (2009), *The Thing About Thugs* (2010), *Reading Literature Today* (2011, Co-authored with Sebastien Doubinsky), *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012), *The New Xenophobia* (2016), *Jihadi Jane* (2016), *Just Another Jihadi Jane* (2016), *Night of Happiness* (2018) and *The body by the Shore* (2022) *Literature Against Fundamentalism* (2024). In the present he is working on 'Writing with the Weight of World' with IWP (International Writing Program).

Literature Review : Many comparative works of fictions deal with the themes of migration, identity, terrorism and radicalisation. Khair's novels fit within this wider trend of literary representations of terrorism where novelists try to understand how ordinary individuals especially from marginalized or minority communities became radicalized and turn to terrorism. Terrorism is portrayed in

literature and it investigates psychological and socio-political aspects, emphasizing the mental transformation of individuals in the context of global terrorism. Explorers like Paur (2007) and Zizek (2002) have examined the portrayal of terrorism, ideological components and its impact on identity. Both point out how authors use narrative to explore the formative identity in the context of international conflict and terror.

How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position evaluates the issues of Islamophobia and western perception of Muslims. The novel satirically undertones about the discrimination and alienation that Muslim immigrants experience in the west, particularly in Denmark. Many scholars discuss about the rising of Islamophobia after the event of 9/11 (America), 26/11 (Mumbai) and 14/02 (Pulwama, J&K). The research expresses the interaction of terrorism and Islamophobia as significant topics in literary analysis as many novels address how fear and prejudice shape the lives of Muslim characters.

The novel by Tabish Khair explores how cultural identity and psychological vulnerability can lead to extremism. *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* investigates identity crises among Muslims and migrants. Along with satire as a literary form has often been employed to

critique authoritarianism, fundamentalism and extremism.

The novel of Tabish Khair engage with the variety of context and complex that are widely discussed in the literature on terrorism, islamophobia, cultural identity and postcolonism. He adds depth to the conversation about how terrorism is represented in contemporary literature. His focus on the immigrant experience, the role of women in jihad and the psychological effects of cultural alienation aligns his novels with broader scholarly discussions on these topics. Both primary text and secondary literature are engaged, the critical study *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* will contribute to the scholarly conversation on terrorism, extremism, radicalisation and cultural identity in modern fiction.

Problem Statement : Migration, Terrorism and cultural identity crisis have been growing increasingly pressing international issues, especially in the context of Islamist extremism. The radical ideologies and psychological manipulation of individuals are spread in the world to take up arms in the name of religion is a troubling phenomenon that affects both national security and social unity. Muslim and other communities are struggling with maintain their cultural and religious identity while facing the growing pressures of terrorism and extremism.

This complex issue generates problem that in relation to how such processes unfold in both Western and non-Western societies.²

The novel, Tabish Khair's *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* reveal valuable insights into the psychological, cultural and social structures which transform ordinary people into extremists. Through the novel Khair delves into the emotional and ideological journey of individuals who have been involved in terrorism. He depicts how fear, religious misguidance and social discrimination push individuals towards radicalization. The novel highlights a kind hearted person and a man who has good intentions can be persuaded to become a terrorist through gradual psychological and cultural manipulation.

The problem of terrorism is not just about isolated acts of violence but about how extremist ideologies spread within communities. *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* presents a more satirical look at the lives of Muslim and Hindus living in Denmark. Along with it addresses issues like social discrimination, Islamophobia and the struggle for identity in a western society. This novel exposes the subtle pressures faced by immigrants and their place in the society and making them vulnerable to extremist ideologies.

The problem of terrorism cannot be solved through military or legal means alone. It requires a comprehensive understanding of the culture, psychological and social dynamics that lead individuals to embrace extremist ideologies. Only by addressing the feelings of isolation, discrimination, and cultural identity crises that fuel radicalization can we hope to reduce the appeal of terrorism and foster a more peaceful and inclusive society.³

The main causes of terrorism are weak and an authoritarian government, political discrimination, poverty, unemployment, lack of resources, lack of education, police mistreatment of the poor, extremist ideologies, discrimination based on race, caste and culture. Along with the doctor is not providing proper treatment and the poor are not receiving proper justice from the court due to lawyer and judge. Ongoing wars or conflicts in certain regions provide fertile ground for terrorist organisation to grow as they attempt to gain power and influence in destabilised areas and military or political interface by foreign powers in a country can fuel local discontent leading to the rise terrorism. Some terrorist organisations misuse religion to promote radical ideologies and violence or corruption often inspire groups to resort to violence in pursuit of their goals and join radical and terrorism group.⁴

Methodology : This paper uses literary analysis approaches, focusing on a close reading *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* by Tabish Khair. This critical study examines text for theme of terrorism, cultural identity and conversion.

The analysis is based on five theoretical frameworks:

1. Textual and Thematic Analysis: Examine major themes like radicalization, identity conflict and extremism. Focus on recurring symbols and how Khair portrays cultural and psychological aspects of terrorism.
2. Character Study: Analyse the internal motivation and transformations of main characters and focusing on their experiences with extremism and identity crises.
3. Cultural and Historical Context: Situate the novels within the context of global terrorism, Islamophobia and migration, exploring their reflection of real-world issues.
4. Psycho-sociological Approach: Use theories of radicalization to interpret the psychological and social factors influencing the character's paths to extremism.

Feminist and Postcolonial Readings : Apply feminist and postcolonial theory to explore gender roles and critiques of western imperialism.

These approaches will offer a well-

rounded analysis of Khair's a depiction of terrorism and culture identity and conversion in both novels.

Discussion : The comparative study explores Tabish Khair's novels *Jihadi Jane* and *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, focusing on the themes of terrorism, extremism, and cultural identity. Both novels examine how ordinary individuals are radicalized into extremists and how the socio-cultural pressures, particularly within the Muslim community, contribute to the rise of terrorist ideologies.

In contrast, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* is a satirical novel that centres on two Muslims and a Hindu living in Denmark. It deals with themes of identity, migration, and Islamophobia in the West. The narrative examines how social discrimination and the pressures of living in a foreign society create a sense of alienation, which can drive individuals to radicalization. This novel also critiques Western attitudes towards Muslims, highlighting the role of social exclusion in perpetuating the cycle of violence and extremism. The satire reveals the irony of trying to fight terrorism while simultaneously reinforcing the very conditions, such as fear and discrimination that contribute to its rise.

Through the characters' experiences in these novels, Khair paints a vivid

picture of the complexities of radicalization and the socio-political dynamics that fuel terrorism. He critiques both extremist ideologies and the reactions of societies that often alienate those on the margins. The novels suggest that the fight against terrorism requires a deeper understanding of cultural identity and a more empathetic approach to the challenges faced by minority communities.

Khair's novel highlights the psycho-sociological aspects of terrorism and emphasizes the need for humanism and awareness in addressing the root causes of radicalization. By exploring the personal stories of individuals drawn into extremist ideologies, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* provide a nuanced analysis of terrorism, identity, and the cultural tensions that exist in today's globalized world.

Finding Results : Through an in-depth analysis of *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, several important findings come to light:

1. This paper expresses Tabish Khair's novel, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position*, analyzing how the novel works deal with themes of migration, terrorism, extremism, and cultural identity.
2. The novel explores how psychological, cultural, and social factors can lead

individuals, especially kind-hearted or ordinary people to radicalization and terrorism.

3. The novel depicts Pakistani muslim taxi driver, Karim gets involved in jihad, exploring how disillusionment and misguided faith can lead them to extremism. The novel focuses on personal transformation into radicalism.

4. How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position is a satirical novel about two Muslims and a Hindu in Denmark, addressing social issues like Islamophobia, identity crises, and social discrimination in the West.

5. The novel emphasizes the importance of understanding social and psychological factors behind terrorism, showing the role of cultural identity, isolation and extremism while advocating for empathy and social awareness as solutions to combat radicalization.

Conclusion : Tabish Khair's novel, How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position offers profound insights into the complex interplay between migration terrorism, extremism, and cultural identity in contemporary society. Through the lenses of two very different but interrelated narratives, Khair explores the psychological, cultural, and social dynamics that propel ordinary individuals into the vortex of radicalization. This critical study underscores that terrorism is not a simplistic or monolithic phenomenon but

is deeply rooted in a web of personal, societal, and global factors. The novel emphasizes that radicalization often targets individuals who are searching for belonging or grappling with unresolved personal issues. This nuanced portrayal challenges stereotypical depictions of terrorists, suggesting that they are often victims of psychological manipulation and social alienation rather than inherent evil.

This novel highlights how social discrimination and the lack of recognition for cultural identity can create fertile ground for radicalization. Khair suggests that extremist ideologies are not only born out of religious zeal but are also fuelled by the alienation and marginalization that many Muslims face in Western societies. By focusing on the personal and social struggles of the characters, Khair shows how terrorism and extremism are often responses to systemic social issues, such as discrimination, racism, and cultural dislocation.

The study analysis of khair's novel reveals that while terrorism may manifest in violent actions, its roots lie in psychological, cultural, and societal forces that go beyond religious doctrine. Both novels highlight the need to address these underlying issues if we are to effectively combat radicalization. Khair's work encourages readers to look beyond the superficial explanations of terrorism and understand the deeper human and

social factors at play. He emphasizes the importance of empathy, awareness, and strong social connections in preventing the isolation and disillusionment that often lead to extremist views.

In addition, this study demonstrates how Khair's novels critique not only the perpetrators of terrorism but also the societal conditions that allow such extremism to flourish. In this novels, the characters' experiences with social discrimination, cultural dislocation, and the pressures of identity serve as reminders that terrorism is not simply a matter of individual pathology but it is also a societal failure. Khair calls for a more inclusive and empathetic approach to addressing the roots of terrorism, one that recognizes the importance of cultural identity, social justice, and psychological well-being.

Tabish Khair's *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* provide a multi-dimensional and deeply humanistic perspective on the issues of terrorism, extremism, and cultural identity. The novel challenges readers to reconsider their assumptions about radicalization, emphasizing that it

is not merely a religious or ideological phenomenon but a deeply human one, rooted in personal vulnerabilities, social pressures, and cultural alienation. By exploring the psychological and cultural processes that lead individuals to extremism, Khair offers a critical commentary on the contemporary global struggle against terrorism. His work reminds us that in order to fight terrorism effectively, we must first understand the human and social factors that drive individuals towards radical ideologies.

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